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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000281

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: HAKIM LARGELY AGREES WITH AMB,S GOVERNMENT
FORMATION PLANS

REF: BAGHDAD 195

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a January 25 meeting, the Ambassador told SCIRI head Abdul Aziz al Hakim that he is focused on three areas of government formation: composition, structure, and program. Hakim told the Ambassador that he agrees largely with the Ambassador's plans for government formation. Hakim said UIC 555 will have a plan for the beginning of the next government's term, and he concurred that government ministries must be run competently and efficiently. Hakim told the Ambassador that agreement with political figures, including Ayad Allawi, would be needed to form a National Security Council. When Hakim raised concerns about the security situation in Iraq, the Ambassador lauded the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) for having improved their ability to coordinate efforts with MNF-I. He also informed Hakim that Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Masoud Barzani will come to Baghdad January 28 for government formation negotiations. Throughout the meeting, Hakim was in an agreeable mood and seemed well informed about the Ambassador's plans for Iraqi government formation. The meeting saw no major points of contention between the Ambassador and Hakim. END SUMMARY.

Laying Out a Road Map

12. (C) In a January 25 meeting, the Ambassador told Hakim that the next Iraqi government should have a 100-day program to give the new government direction. Such a program, the Ambassador added, would be a way to hold the government accountable to the people. Hakim largely agreed, although he said the program that UIC 555 develops may be for a period longer than 100 days. Hakim noted that he is prepared to discuss such issues with KDP leader Masoud Barzani when he comes to Baghdad on January 28.

The Ministries

13. (C) The Ambassador said the government ministers should be technocrats, and -- if it is necessary to dole out political favors -- the party faithful could be minister-advisors. The Ambassador referred to the Sadrist Minister of Health as an example of the type of ineffectual minister the GOI should not have. The Ambassador added the security ministries especially need to have non-partisan, non-sectarian leadership that is widely accepted. Hakim agreed, emphasizing that anyone who supports terror is unacceptable to lead a ministry. He added that the criteria for such positions have yet to be decided.

¶4. (C) The various ministries, the Ambassador recommended, should be grouped into three compartments: economics, security, and services. Each compartment, he elaborated, should be led by a Deputy Prime Minister or a special representative of the Prime Minister. Hakim agreed but added there may be a fourth basket dealing with social issues such as martyrs.

The National Security Council

¶5. (C) Stressing the need to "work within the rules," Hakim agreed with the Ambassador that a National Security Council is needed. Such a body, Hakim said, could bring together the President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, the leader of the Kurdish region, and other Iraqi leaders to discuss big issues facing Iraq. This body would not work on day-to-day operations of the country, the Ambassador said, but could embody national unity. This body could be simply an advisory committee, or it could be a legal body that has veto power over the Prime Minister's government. Barzani, the Ambassador noted, favors a robust National Security Council that is more than just an advisory body.

The Need For a Strong Government

¶6. (C) Hakim agreed with the Ambassador that the next PM should show strong leadership and should be able to account for the whereabouts of the ministers. The Ambassador stressed that the ministers do not work for political leaders but for the Prime Minister.

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Hakim's Security Concerns

¶7. (C) Hakim mentioned he is concerned about the security situation in Iraq. The Ambassador said he has spoken with Minister of Interior Bayan Jabr, who is satisfied with the level of MNF-I and Ministry of Interior cooperation. The Ambassador said close ties also have been achieved with the Ministry of Defense.

Comment

¶8. (C) COMMENT: During the meeting Hakim seemed unusually well-tempered and non-confrontational. He seemed well informed about the direction of government formation discussions on the part of other Shia and Kurdish leaders. END COMMENT.
KHALILZAD